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TILDEN MEMORABILIA

A SERIES OF HISTORICAL LETTERS.

BY

J. FAIRFAX McLAUGHLIN.

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TILDEN MEMORABILIA.

I.

AGED PRESIDENTS.

THE approaching Presidential election may be regarded as another "Impending Crisis." Mistakes made now may be attended with irretrievable consequences. We made one in 1876. Shall we make another in 1880? I have been thinking a good deal of late, as probably a great many others have been doing, whether it is wise policy to put very old men at the head of the Government. I think it is bad policy, because an aged man holds his life by a frail tenure and may pass away at any moment. Frequent changes of administration are full of peril. They disturb the country and are unfavorable not only to the national and business interests, but to the stability of our institutions. To put an infirm man of 70 years of age at the head of affairs is to run a great and unnecessary risk. That is the age at which the constitutions of many of the States retire Judges from their seats on the bench. Such a provision is founded in wisdom, the inspired wisdon of the Bible, for 70 years is what the Psalmist allows as the measure of our days. "The days of our age are three-score years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to four-score years, yet is their strength then but labor and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone."

There are two things of great interest to the American people at this day upon which the Constitution is silent: First, It does not prohibit a candidate from running for a third term for President; Second, It does not disqualify a citizen who is 70 years of age from filling the Presidential office.

But in civil government, as well as in moral law, there are two kinds of evil, each of which is to be avoided. The one is expressly mentioned in the letter of the law, and is called by the publicists *malum prohibitum*, a prohibited evil; the other, upon which the law is silent, is called *malum in se*—an evil in itself. The latter is often a graver evil than any denounced in constitutions and statute-books.

American history affords an unbroken line of precedents against septuagenarian candidates for the Presidency. I shall here consider the dangers to the country which would be apt to follow the accession of an infirm and aged man to that office.

Samuel J. Tilden was born at New Lebanon, Columbia County, New York. The date of his birth is in doubt. Mr. Cook, who wrote an amusing campaign life of Mr. Tilden in 1876, asserts that it was Feb. 9th, 1814. But I have read Lieut. Gov. Dorsheimer informed the correspondent of the Chicago *Tribune* at Saratoga Springs, on the 12th of August, 1879, that the true date was Feb. 9., 1810. According to Cook's dates, who wrote under the personal direction of Mr. Tilden himself, the latter was 66 years old on the 9th of February, 1880. According to Dorsheimer's reckoning, who mentioned Gov. Seymour as his informant, Tilden completed his 70th year on the 9th of February, 1880. When a man has cut a figure in the world, the exact time of his birth, especially if there is a controversy about it, becomes an interesting question to the public. As young Mr. Cook is known to have written the campaign life of Tilden under that gentleman's immediate supervision, the reasons for Lieut.-Gov. Dorsheimer's rejection of Mr. Tilden's own statement in respect to his age are worthy of examination.

Cook says at page 1 of his book: "Samuel J. Tilden was born in New Lebanon, Columbia County. New York, on the 9th day of February, 1814." Mr. Dorsheimer said in reply to the question of the correspondent of the Chicago *Tribune*: "Well, Mr. Tilden is really about 70 years old. He will be 70 years old next February, and 71 years old at the next Presidential election." "But Tilden says he is only 65 years old," suggested the correspondent. "I know it," replied the Lieutenant-Governor; "I know he says so, because it is policy, for political reasons, for him to be younger than he really is. Now I've been talking with Horatio Seymour up at Utica about Mr. Tilden's age a good deal lately; and Mr. Seymour says that Mr. Tilden has dropped five years from his true age. Mr. Seymour says that for twenty years before Mr. Tilden ran for the Presidency they used frequently to compare their ages, and Mr. Tilden was

a few month's older than he. Mr. Tilden's birthday is in February, while Mr. Seymour's is in May."

"How did Gov. Seymour express the idea to you? I mean, give me his exact words," said the newspaper man. "Well," said Lieutenant Gov. Dorsheimer, "Seymour said: 'Tilden and I (Seymour) are about the same age. I will be 69 in May, 1879, and Tilden was 69 in February. Tilden is a few months older than I am. He is going on 70 years old; and when he says he is 65 years old he does it for political reasons.'"

It will be recollected that some time last year an extended biographical sketch of Horatio Seymour was published in the New York *Times*. An editorial appeared in the same paper on the 5th of December, 1879, giving publicity to a remark of Gov. Seymour to the representative of the *Times*, which it was alleged by the editor had been withheld from publication when the sketch appeared, at the request of Gov. Seymour himself that it should not be given at that time. Here is the remark of the Sage of Deerfield, as it appeared in the *Times* last December: "When I see tottering gray beards about the edge of the grave, engaged in a scramble for place and power, I am reminded of 'Holbein's Dance of Death.' I have a morbid horror of such a picture, and I shall never be found making one in such a cotillion."

The recent attacks of some of Mr. Tilden's agents on Gov. Seymour, and the hisses with which they received the mention of his name at their late Syracuse Convention, may be better understood in the light of the preceding remark, and of Lieut.-Gov. Dorsheimer's reported revelations to the correspondent of the Chicago *Tribune*.

I have but a single comment to make in this connection. Mr. Tilden wrote an "Address to the People" during the Presidential campaign of 1832, now nearly fifty years ago, which Martin Van Buren procured to be published in the Albany *Argus*. With vain labor Mr. Tilden's biographer attempts to explain away the palpable absurdity between the date which he assigns for the birth of Tilden and the date when the above "Address to the People" was written. Cook says Mr. Van Buren "did not stop to inquire the age of the author. He accepted him off-hand as one worthy to *think* for the party" (p. 7). Yet, if he was born in 1814, the author of this "supreme effort of the Democrats," as Cook styles it, was a beardless boy of 18, who had then never seen the inside of a college. When it is remembered that Mr. Tilden has a tendency to paralysis, and that his left arm and eye show the incipient blight of that or some cognate disease, his tenderness about his age is satisfactorily explained.

He cannot now stand much fatigue. His mind, absorbed for so long by the overmastering passion for making money, responds but inertly to the demands upon it. Avarice, the vice of old age, too often grows more and more with the decay of the faculties. Even the ambition to become President cannot control it. One of Mr. Tilden's most profitable and questionable speculations was made last summer. "Cipher Allen is running," was the expressive way in which a Wall street man wired the news to Mr. Cyrus W. Field in England that Mr. Tilden was flooding the market with Elevated Railroad stock, and remorselessly adding to his "bar'l" a million of the tax-payers' money in violation of his promises to the over-confiding Mr. Field. The St. Louis, Alton and Terre Haute confession and restitution are of still more recent occurence.

But, I repeat, there is no constitutional limitation, except in the minimum scale, upon the age of the Presidents. By the first section of Article II. of the Constitution among other qualifications required in candidates for the Presidency, it is provided as follows: "Neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of 35 years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States." According to Mr. Tilden's own admission respecting his age, he will be in his 68th year should he live until the 4th of March, 1881, when the next President of the United States will enter the White House. According to the alleged Seymour-Dorsheimer dates, which are borne out by the internal evidence of the case, and which I must therefore accept as probably true, Mr. Tilden if alive will be in his 72d year when next March shall have rolled round.

There has never been a single President, from Washington to Hayes, who had reached so great an age as this, either upon his accession to or at his retirement from the Presidential office. Gen. Harrison, the most aged of all the Presidents, was 68 years, 3 weeks and 2 days old when he entered the White House. It took the handshakers and applicants for office precisely one month to kill him. When Washington was elected he was 57 years old; John Adams was 62 years old; Jefferson, 58 years old; Madison, 58; Monroe, 59; John Quincy Adams, 58; Jackson, 62; Van Buren, 54; Harrison 68 (and he died in a month); Tyler, 51; Polk, 50; Taylor, 64 (and he died within sixteen months); Fillmore, 50; Pierce, 48; Buchanan, 65; Lincoln, 52; Johnson, 56; Grant, 46; Hayes, 54.

From these figures some interesting conclusions are deducible. It will be observed that the table of mortality among the Presidents is confined to those who had passed their 65th year. Mr. Lincoln was assassinated and therefore

is not included in the basis of the calculation. Mr. Buchanan was 65 years old when he became President, but he was a man of extraordinary physical powers, extremely abstemious in eating and drinking, and was in the habit of retiring every night at 9 o'clock, a rule he never transcended without great reluctance. When the Prince of Wales was a guest at the White House in 1859, some of the company proposed a quadrille one evening about 9.30 o'clock, but the Prince objected lest the music should disturb Mr. Buchanan's slumbers. This robust man died not very long after he left the Executive office, when he was not far beyond the present age of Mr. Tilden. Seven of the Presidents were re-elected and six of them filled a second term, yet not one of them at the close of his eight years as Chief Magistrate was as old as Mr. Tilden will be on the 4th of next March. Horace Greeley, tempest-tossed and prostrated, fell a victim to the excitements of a Presidential struggle at a time when he was eight years younger than Mr. Tilden is at present.

There is no other position in the world more trying than that of President of the United States. A man over 70 years old and in feeble health who should be placed in that office would feel as though he had been thrown into the rapids of Niagara. The next census will show nearly 50,000,000 people for our President to rule over. Hundreds of thousands of these will go to shake his hand and tug at his arm, while other hundreds of thousands of them, personally or by proxy, will keep him on the rack as long as he has an office to give away. Would not an infirm septuagenarian be tempted to take the plunge of the political Niagara in sheer desperation over the prospect of ever living to the end of his term? Nor would these be all of his burdens. The opposition finds its delight and often its chief profit in annoying the President. It keeps up petty and incessant attacks on him, sometimes a fierce and formidable warfare. If parties are nearly evenly balanced, the Administration party will have their hands full in carrying through their measures. If the opposition is in a majority, the President is at the mercy of his enemies; the sole actual source of power left to him is the Executive veto. No one has forgotten the onslaught of the Republican Senate and House on Andrew Johnson. Had Mr. Johnson been 70 years old instead of 56, the stroke of apoplexy which finally took him off probably would have befallen him in the White House. And Mr. Johnson was, what Mr. Tilden is not, a man of iron nerve and indomitable spirit.

"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," is as true to-day as it was when Shakespeare said it, whether the head be that of Emperor, Czar, or

President. *It must be clear to reflecting men that the chances of a President in impaired health, and over 70 years old of surviving to the close of his term, would hardly be as one to twenty. No good insurance company could be induced to take a risk on his life. Why should the people of the whole United States be expected to do it?*

II.

NO LONGER "HIS SUPERFLUOUS EXCELLENCY."

In the last paper I adduced some of the more obvious reasons against the election of an infirm and aged man to the Presidency of the United States. I endeavored to make it clear, on the reported testimony of Gov. Seymour and Mr. Dorsheimer, as well as by the internal evidence of the case, that Samuel J. Tilden is over 70 years of age, and that he will be, if alive on the 4th of next March, in his 72d year. I further called attention to the fact that no President, from Washington to Hayes, inclusive, was as old at the close either of his first or second term as Mr. Tilden will be on the recurrence of his next birthday, February 9, 1881. Gen. Harrison, the oldest of them all, was 68 years of age, and died in a month after his inauguration. Gen. Taylor was in his 65th year, and died early in the second year of his administration. I concluded by expressing the opinion, in view of Mr. Tilden's age and infirmities, that no good insurance company could be induced to insure his life, and by asking the question, why then should the people of the whole United States be expected to do it?

This recapitulation brings me face to face with the direct consequences likely to follow if an old and decrepit citizen should be elevated to the Presidential office. From the first the Vice-President would undoubtedly be regarded as the coming man. That official used to be called "his Superfluous Excellency," for from 1789 to 1840 the people of the United States were sensible enough to elect only Presidents in the prime of life, and none of them died in office. The old classical adage of a sound mind in a sound body, *mens sana in corpore sano*, was never lost sight of by the fathers. But the Whigs were rash enough to experiment with an old soldier in 1840, and then came Capt. Tyler to break the tradition of "his Superfluous Excellency," and to

vault into the saddle of the dead Cid. In the eyes of an aged President and his whole vast army of officeholders the Vice-President would appear a sort of spectre to conjure up forebodings of evil. A Vice-President's party would be formed, and this party banded together and subsisting on great expectations would always be on the lookout for a funeral at the White House. Should the President die, the succession with its sweeping removals from and appointments to all offices, from Cabinet portfolios to tide-waiters, would be equivalent to a new Presidential election, that most trying of all the ordeals of uncertainty and danger to which the Federal Government is exposed.

In the seventy-second number of the *Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton points out the peril of frequent Presidential changes, and what he styles the "intimate connection between the duration of the Executive Magistrate in office and the stability of the system of administration." He then, in his usual profound way, proceeds as follows to the discussion of the subject.: "To undo what has been done by a predecessor is very often considered by a successor as the best proof he can give of his own capacity and desert; * * and that the less he resembles him the more he will recommend himself to the favor of his constituents. These considerations," Mr. Hamilton continues, "and the influence of personal confidences and attachments, would be likely to induce every new President to promote a change of men to fill the subordinate stations, and these causes together could not fail to occasion a disgraceful and ruinous mutability in the administration of the Government."—(The *Federalist*, p. 391.) This argument of the great statesman was directed only to the contemplation of the changes which would be brought about by a new election, or to use his own words, as "the result of public choice." How much more forcible is its application to the case of a succession caused by the death of a President.

It would seem on a superficial view of the subject, that a Vice-President chosen by the same party which elects the President could be equally relied on with him to carry out its will and conform his conduct to its principles. But the supposition, plausible as it appears on its face, is an utter fallacy. Pregnant examples attest it. The Whigs in 1840 swept the country like a hurricane. Never was ushered in fairer morning to what promised to be a long day of sunshine for the Whigs than that which dawned on the morrow of the Hard Cider campaign of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." The Democrats were thoroughly routed. The spell of the name of Jackson was broken. Daniel Webster walked Jove-like into the State Department. Henry Clay sat

in the Senate sovereign of the ascendant. John Minor Botts was the Administration whip in the House. In one little month the Whig dynasty, reared doric-like on these granite foundations, toppled from its place and was laid in the dust. *Ilium fuit.* President Harrison died in April. Vice-President Tyler succeeded to the Presidency. The Congress met in extra session on the 31st of May. A bill creating a Fiscal Bank of the United States, the new-fangled name which Clay had coined in order to placate Tyler, was passed on the 6th of August. On the 16th of August this bill—the darling project of the Whig party, for which they had pleaded and labored and battled so hard—was vetoed by President Tyler. That night so great was the excitement, a furious Whig mob attacked the President's house, while Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Buchanan and other Democratic Senators, and Mr. Gilmer and other Democratic Congressmen were said to be gathered together in the East room congratulating President Tyler upon his veto, and holding high revel over the discomfiture of the Whigs. Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, a few days after, introduced in the Senate a resolution of inquiry into the riotous proceedings outside of the White House on the night of the 16th of August. Henry Clay seized the occasion to twit the Democrats on the inside over their capture of the President a little earlier on the night of the riot on the outside. He indulged in one of those inimitable displays of badinage for which he was so noted, at the expense of John Tyler's Democratic guests. He described their visit as "an irruption into the President's house of the whole Locofoco party in Congress." He gave a description in character of each of the leading Democrats. The cartoon of Mr. Calhoun was very spirited, preserving enough resemblance to that great statesman to make the sketch an excellent hit.

"I think," Mr. Clay said, "I can now see the principal *dramatis personæ* who figured in the scene. There stood the grave and distinguished Senator from South Carolina——"

Mr. Calhoun instantly rose to make an explanation, but Mr. Clay would not yield or allow of interruption. "There, I say," he continued, "I can imagine stood the Senator from South Carolina, tall, careworn, with furrowed brow and haggard cheek and eye, intensely gazing, looking as if he were dissecting the last and newest abstraction which sprang from some metaphysician's brain, and muttering to himself, in half-uttered sounds, 'This is indeed a crisis.'" The latter was a favorite expression of Calhoun's, and the Senators were convulsed with laughter. Clay had the joke, but the Democrats had the President, thanks to the Whig blunder of electing to the Presidential office a

man who was nearly three-score years and ten. Is it probable that Mr. Tilden would last much longer than did Gen. Harrison? A week at hand-shaking, such as office-seekers know how to give, would probably do for an invalid over 70 years old.

In spite of the stern lesson the Whigs had received with Harrison, they repeated the same mistake eight years later by nominating another aged man for Chief Magistrate. Their first national success took place in 1840. They enjoyed the fruits of victory just one month. Their second and last success was won in 1848. Gen. Taylor entered the White House March 4, 1849, and he died on the 9th of July, 1850, when he was in his 66th year. Millard Fillmore succeeded to the Presidency. A party revolution took place on the coming in of Mr. Fillmore far more radical than that which followed the Tyler succession. It culminated in the disruption and final extinction of the Whig party. John J. Crittenden and Alexander H. Stephens had been Gen. Taylor's chief advisers until William H. Seward captured the President and became the Administration leader in the Senate. Mr. Stephens had been the first man to broach Taylor's name for the Presidency, and was one of the chief organizers of that famous Taylor phalanx among Congressmen known as the "Young Indians' Club." Abraham Lincoln, then a member of the House of Representatives, was in this club, and was an active Taylor man. Mr. Stephens was invited by the President to a seat in his Cabinet, but declined it, preferring parliamentary life, and recommended William Ballard Preston, of Virginia, in place of himself for a Cabinet appointment. The President appointed Mr. Preston Secretary of the Navy, and became more attached to him than to any other member of his Cabinet. The old British constitutional fiction made the Lord High Chancellor keeper of the king's conscience. The dashing Virginian had not been long in the President's councils before the politicians discovered that the surest way to the President's heart was first to win that of Mr. Preston.

On the meeting of the Legislature of New York in 1849, William H. Seward was a candidate for United States Senator. His election had been rendered possible by the Van Buren-Tilden bolt of the preceding year. Fully appreciating the importance of the Federal patronage in his contest for the Senatorship, Mr. Seward went to Washington, and paid assiduous court to Mr. Preston. As a charmer Seward had few equals. He was addicted to aphorisms, and studied *bon mots* with the diligence of Sheridan. His affectation of philosophy was set off by good manners and easy address. He had been a schoolmaster in Georgia, and had at his command a fund of South-of-Potomac anec-

dotes and reminiscences. In the society of Southerners he was never so happy as when talking about the types and modes and fascinations of Southern society. The Tazewells, Randolphs, Gastons, Lowndeses, Calhouns, Crawfords, Forsyths, Lumpkins, and other famous Cavaliers were all names familiar on Mr. Seward's lips as household words.

It did not take him long to win Preston, and that gentleman soon set about the task of winning over Gen. Taylor to the side of the ingenuous ex-Governor of New York, who loved the South so much he could scarcely be brought to speak about anything else when in Secretary Preston's company. But Taylor's confidence was of slower growth than the other's. Seward's and Gilmer's correspondence, when they were respectively Governors of New York and Virginia, in regard to the celebrated kidnapped negro case, and several other incidents in Seward's career, had given the latter the reputation of being a sectional agitator. If transferred to national politics, it was feared he would add new fuel to the flame of angry passions already raging between the North and South. The President above all things sought at the outset of his term to allay these passions, and to render his administration the era of pacification. When Preston made Seward aware of the obstacles to his preferment, the latter parried all objections with admirable tact, and went so far as to commit himself by pledges to take no part in the fierce anti-slavery debates. He assured Mr. Preston, if he was successful in the contest, he would regard it as an Administration triumph in New York, and that in such event he would feel himself precluded from pursuing any line of conduct in the Senate which an exponent of the policy of the Administration could not with propriety and honor adopt. In a word, in consideration of the bestowal of the vast patronage of the Administration in New York, Mr. Seward fully committed himself by pledges, *which will yet see the light of day*, to abstain from participation in the abolition movement, and to pursue a policy of conciliation and compromise at Washington. These committals and pledges brought the President to a favorable disposition in relation to Mr. Seward, and he was elected Senator to succeed a Democrat.

But another difficulty stood in the way on Seward's arrival in Washington, which was not less formidable than the first. Vice-President Fillmore and ex-Governor Seward were fierce political enemies, and personally Seward cordially hated Fillmore. They were the leaders respectively of the rival wings of the New York Whigs. The antagonism between them was as bitter and irreconcilable as is that between Tilden and Kelly in our own times.

Webster and Crittenden, and the leading Whigs of the Senate and House, were the friends of the Vice-President, and had been utterly opposed to the elevation of Seward on any terms. An angry controversy arose in Administration circles. Alienations took place between life-long friends. These disputes served but to intensify the conflicting views of the disputants, as collisions of that character generally do. Preston, who had acquired complete personal ascendancy over the President, found but little trouble to enlist the old hero of Buena Vista on the side of Mr. Seward. Mr. Fillmore had asked that two gentlemen whom he recommended might be appointed Collector of Customs and Postmaster at Buffalo, where he resided. But Seward opposed the appointments and Taylor did not make them. Two Seward men, both enemies of Fillmore, were appointed. So little was the Vice-President regarded, or rather I should say, so contumeliously, that he was compelled in self-respect to discontinue his visits to the President's house. Seward was there all the time he could spare from the Senate, and he wielded the Administiation lash with exasperating malignity. The breach between the President and Vice-President now extended to their friends, and many of the leaders were not even on speaking terms. The Whig party was rent in twain.

On the 11th day of March, 1850, Seward made a violent abolition speech in the Senate in contemptuous disregard of his pledges to William Ballard Preston. The Georgia schoolmaster had completely outwitted the Secretary of the Navy. Charles Francis Adams, the descendant of two Presidents who was aware of the "agreement" between Seward and Taylor's Administration, afterwards in his Albany memorial address on the Auburn statesman, made this violation of voluntary pledges a theme for eulogy.

And now Seward in the month of March was master of the situation. In all human probability he would be the next President of the United States. He had only to stretch forth his hand and the sceptre was in his grasp. But his triumph was destined to be short-lived. The summer of his glory was soon overcast with stormy portents. Within four little months Zachary Taylor lay dead in the White House. The lesson of Harrison had been forgotten. Fillmore, Seward's dearest foe, was President. The Whig party soon went down forever, and William H. Seward was buried for the time being beneath its ruins. It was about this time Daniel Webster said to his old friend Peter Harvey: "One of the convictions of my mind, and it is very strong, is that the people of the United States will never intrust their destinies and the administration of their Government to the hands of William H. Seward and

his associates."—("Reminiscences of Daniel Webster, by Peter Harvey," p. 200).

In their day of power the Whigs had again elected an old man President who was physically at the end of his race. That mistake which had cost them so dearly the first time, proved when repeated the Iliad of all their woes.

III.

"RUINOUS MUTABILITY."

I undertook to show in my preceding letter that no Vice-President ever succeeded to the unexpired term of a President who died in office without grievous injury to the party in power. If a President needs must die, of course a Vice-President has to take his place, but it is a sort of stepfather arrangement all the same. "Ruinous mutability" is Hamilton's description of it. We have had three memorable examples in our history to establish the truth of my proposition—Tyler, Fillmore and Johnson. The Whig party was overthrown in 1841 by its own Vice-President, John Tyler; and it was destroyed in 1852 by William H. Seward, Taylor's death and Vice-President Fillmore's elevation having hastened the catastrophe. If Taylor had lived, Seward would probably have striven to preserve the Whig party as a national organization. As it was, the Van Buren-Tilden-Lucius Robinson-Free Soil bolt of 1848 had paved the way for a new and still more bitter anti-Democratic party, and Seward was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity which these bolters gave to him. Thus Fillmore's accession hastened the downfall of the Whig, and the foundation of the Republican party. The case of Andrew Johnson is one of the most marked of all. The party which had elected him Vice-President found itself at deadly war with the man of their own choice when he succeeded to the Presidency, after the sad and deplorable death of Mr. Lincoln by the assassin's pistol. New civil convulsions were on the point of breaking out.

I have already lifted the veil a little, just a little, in order to afford to my readers an inside view of the methods by which Mr. Seward first got into national politics. Perhaps I dwelt a little too long on this matter, but all the

writers on the events of that day whose accounts I have seen are either silent in relation to the Taylor-Fillmore feud, or unsatisfactory and inaccurate in their explanations of its origin, as well as of its extent and bitterness, and the influence it had in the disintegration and extinction of the Whig party. Both Daniel Webster and Charles Francis Adams date the beginning of the end of Whigism as a national organization from the death of President Taylor. Had a younger man been in the White House, the revolution, in men and measures which followed upon the death of the old hero of Buena Vista probably would have been avoided, The overthrow of Sewardism was effected by Mr. Fillmore, and was salutary to every national interest. Still, the shock to the stability of the Federal system which is inseparable from frequent changes of administration cannot but be regarded as a calamity. If, instead of Gen. Taylor, the Whigs had elected Tom Corwin, or any other man not in the decline of life, the Whig party might have survived to this day in all its pristine strength. Let the Democrats take to heart these impressive examples. The words of Horatio Seymour cannot be repeated too often. "When I see tottering gray-beards," he said, "about the edge of the grave, engaged in a scramble for place and power, I am reminded of 'Holbein's Dance of Death.' I have a morbid horror of such a picture, and I shall never be found making one in such a cotillion."

The venerable Thurlow Weed might throw some light upon the Taylor-Fillmore feud, for he was Mr. Seward's *fidus Achates*, and never again recovered his lost influence after the death of Gen. Taylor. That famous Whig writer "Oliver Oldschool" (Nathan Sargent), who was in Washington during those days, speaks of the enmity which had sprung up between Taylor and Fillmore and their several friends. But he confesses that he was ignorant of the cause of the trouble. In his account of the accession of Fillmore this writer says: "Called suddenly to assume the duties of President, Mr. Fillmore had a perplexing task to perform in finding the proper men from different sections of the country to fill the highest offices under him. * * This required time—some weeks at least. But the members of the late Cabinet were unwilling to remain. Two or three did so reluctantly until the 22d of July; the others left the city almost immediately. For some reason," continues Sargent, "which I could never divine, there had been exhibited on the part of Gen. Taylor's Cabinet a very unfriendly disposition towards the Vice-President. No favor he had asked had been granted. He had recommended two gentleman for Collector of Customs and Postmaster at Buffalo, where he resided: neither was

appointed, but in their stead men politically inimical to him—Whigs, but Seward, anti-Fillmore Whigs. There was cause, therefore, for these gentlemen not wishing to remain and perform the duties of their respective departments under such circumstances. Mr. Clayton, Secretary of State, left immediately, transacting no business whatever with Mr. Fillmore, and Mr. Webster was at once appointed in his place."—("Public Men and Events," Vol. II, pp. 372–373.)

But Charles Francis Adams was better informed than Nathan Sargent of the underlying cause of the Whig feud. In his address, April 18, 1873, before the New York Legislature, on the life and character of William H. Seward, Mr. Adams expressly refers to the agreement between the Senator from New York and Taylor's Administration. Whether Mr. Seward ever confided to Mr. Adams the whole story of his secret pledges to William Ballard Preston, I know not. It is to be hoped he did not, for Adams exults over Seward's utter disregard of those self-imposed pledges, and the descendant of two Presidents would hardly justify such a thing as that, and find in Seward's bad faith a fit topic for glowing eulogy. Charles Francis Adams was the champion of Samuel J. Tilden in 1876, as Tilden had been the champion of Adams in 1848, when the latter was the Vice-Presidential candidate of the Buffalo Convention, to which Tilden was a delegate. The bolting Whigs and the bolting Democrats who then united with the Massachusetts Abolitionists of the fanatical school and the Gerrit-Smith Abolitionists of the Liberty Party, and nominated Van Buren and Adams, presented a spectacle utterly incongruous in all its parts, of lifelong foes in apparent harmony, and of sincere sentimentalists and trading politicians exchanging the kiss of peace, which proved but a hollow truce until after the election. It is absolutely safe to say that the Buffalo Convention of 1848 has no counterpart in American history, and quite as safe to predict that no such unnatural combination of unblushing venality and deluded philanthropy will ever again disgrace the country.

But I repeat that Charles Francis Adams, knows more about the political secrets of 1848–52 than did "Oliver Oldschool." So do Thurlow Weed and James Watson Webb. I would like to see Mr. Adams attempt to justify that part of his Seward eulogy in which he exults over his hero's violation of plighted faith. Daniel Webster, if alive to-day, could tell the whole story. Perhaps among his literary remains the true history of the last days of the Whig party may yet be found. Mr. Webster was the guide, philosopher and friend of Mr. Fillmore. He too had been subjected to the lash of the Taylor

Administration. "During the month of June," says Peter Harvey, "after the inauguration of President Taylor, I drove in company with Mr. Webster from Washington to the Virginia shore to a place called the 'Falls.' As we were passing through Alexandria, Mr. Webster ordered the coachman to stop, and pointing to an old and decaying mansion, he said:

"'That large white house, with dilapidated walls and broken fences, was the hotel where I boarded when I first entered Congress from New Hampshire. It was then the Federal headquarters. Gov. Gore, Rufus King and John Marshall were fellow boarders. Gov. Gore used to drive out of that gate in a coach drawn by four horses and attended by servants in livery.'

"After proceeding thus far Mr. Webster seemed to be lost in a profound reverie, and, apparently soliloquizing, he exclaimed:

"'All gone, all gone! They were extraordinary men. We shall never see their like again. Our country has no such men now; but they are gone, all gone! I shall soon follow, and I care very little how soon. * * The public are ungrateful. The man who serves the public most faithfully receives no adequate reward. In my own history, those acts which have been, before God, the most disinterested and the least stained by selfish considerations, have been precisely those for which I have been most freely abused. * * I have had in the course of my official life, which is not a short one, my full share of ingratitude; but the unkindest cut of all—the shaft that has sunk deepest in my breast—has been the refusal of this Administration to grant my request for an office of small pecuniary consideration for my only son.'"—("Reminiscences of Webster," p. 176.)

Poor Fletcher Webster, this only son of the Great Expounder, was afterwards killed in the civil war, within a few miles of the spot where his father expressed his indignation over the treatment to which he had been subjected by William H. Seward. But within a single year from the date of the above conversation Webster was back in the State Department, and his son Fletcher was there too, while Seward was moralizing over the tremendous folly of electing a decrepit old man President of the United States.

IV.

THE SELF-CONSECRATED SOLDIER.

Never was there a greater triumph won over the combined forces of centralization and corruption than the Democratic Presidential victory of 1876. As earnest and brave a host as ever was marshalled went to the polls by millions and buried Grantism and the Radical party in what should have been a grave without a resurrection. Putting forth their strength, like the parting of the waters of the great deep, the Democrats elected the President by upwards of 250,000 majority at the polls, and a majority of three Electoral Colleges. The people had done their part. The chosen leader must now do his.

Oh, for one hour of Andrew Jackson in that crisis of the national life! But instead of Jackson, instead of the lordly eagle, we had only a paltry little wren of faction who was blown away like a feather at the first rustling of the storm. No man has a right to subject a great party to ignominy. Even a majority of the American people may be defeated; but if led by a courageous and wise statesman, they never can be cheated and humiliated. When the people lay aside every other consideration and embark in a mighty struggle, they have a right after they have succeeded, to hold that man to the sternest account who shrinks from the responsibility of making good the title they have bestowed upon him. He must have a craven heart who dares not uphold the honor of his country after having impudently proclaimed himself its champion, and after he has been indefeasibly commissioned by the people and the Electoral Colleges as President of the United States. Is it conceivable that a man of heroic mould, to whom such a mighty trust had been committed, would sink down in abject terror while the sovereignty of the people and the States was being assassinated before his eyes? Not thus did Jefferson burrow in a hole when Aaron Burr was exhausting the resources of his satanic genius to snatch from him the Presidency in 1801. Right in the breach where the New England party was undermining him Mr. Jefferson took his position, as soon as it became known that he was the people's choice for President. But Jefferson was not a man of common clay like Tilden. He had the wisdom as well as the nerve to take the tide "at the flood," and to become the vindicator of the imperilled cause of his countrymen. During the course of an interesting debate in Congress in 1817, John Randolph de-

clared that the facts need be concealed no longer, and that the corrupt intrigues of the Federalists to defeat Jefferson and elect Burr would have been resisted by arms; that General Dark's brigade was ready to make good the people's will; and if it had become necessary to do it, the conspiracy would have been met by force. Happily, the patriotism of Alexander Hamilton rose superior to the ties of party and to his unfriendliness towards Jefferson. Hamilton went to Washington city and broke up the cabal between Burr and the Federalists. Jefferson was elected, but poor Hamilton, as John Randolph declared, for this patriotic service in 1801, afterwards paid the penalty of his life. Had he like Tilden at a later day laid *perdu* in New York while the conspiracy was hatching at the capital, the bullet of Burr never would have pierced his noble bosom. Mr. Tilden thinks perhaps that a person better be a coward than a corpse. An anecdote used to be told of a certain naval officer in the war of 1812 of the more timid sort, whom a saucy Englishman once challenged to an engagement on the high seas. The American, though very well equipped, had some qualms about his guns, and so postponed the battle until after he had put into port to get a new supply. He there met Commodore Decatur, and explained the situation and his doubts. The hero's spirit flashed up instantly. "Doubts, doubts!" he exclaimed; "good God, man, the war's going to be too short to have such a chance twice. You ought to have sunk the Englishman. You were not sent to doubt, but to fight." A timid, procrastinating politician may not understand this, but Decatur was right. The great men of the earth have an instinct in affairs above their fellow-men, which enables them to preserve a perfect view of a scene that is constantly changing, and to seize the propitious moment which is forever passed before it is perceived by the common eye.

Mr. Tilden betrayed the Democracy in the hour of its triumph. A flavor of Cipher Dispatches was clinging to his garments, and he skulked in holes and dark places when of all men in the world the people were looking for their chosen leader. Mr. Tilden left the matter to his agents, Pelton, Marble, and Smith Weed. How different his conduct was when the hour for action arrived from what it had been when a Committee of the St. Louis Convention came to notify him of his nomination. Then he made a high-sounding speech, and among other things said:

"I, therefore, if your choice should be ratified by the people at the election, should enter upon the great duties which would fall upon me, not as a holiday recreation, but very much in that spirit of consecration in which the soldier enters battle."

When the time came to redeem that boast, the self-consecrated soldier was paralyzed with fear, and capitulated at the sound of the first gun. The Democratic party was placed in an attitude of opprobrium before the world as humiliating as it was undeserved. But after the demoralization into which Mr. Tilden had been thrown by the crisis had passed away, and his nervous prostration was so far relieved by the subsidence of its cause as to enable him once more to find his voice, this Ancient Pistol began to whisper forth something about the "great fraud," and to declare that it never should be condoned, never, never.

Since the monumental infamy of the Cipher Dispatches was unearthed, the Democratic party of the city of New York, which was never favorably disposed to Mr. Tilden, has been unalterably opposed to his renomination. It did not hesitate to make known its detestation of the man and his methods after that exposure. By recourse to a system of bribery and corruption, happily without other example in our history and destructive to the national morality, Mr. Tilden had impaired the prestige of the Democratic party, which was robbed of the Presidential office through his own imbecile cowardice and the co-operative frauds of the Republican party. To support such a man again would render those supporting him accessories after the fact to a crime so mean that it concealed itself in ciphers, and so enormous that the corruption of Verres, the venality of Robert Walpole, and the vulgar rascality of the Ring depredators in New York pale into insignificance in comparison with it. All of these historical delinquents openly traded on the immorality of their fellow men. Mr. Tilden burst on the world as a preordained reformer, and hired others to cheat for him while himself masquerading as an apostle of purity.

I think it was Mr. Manton Marble who declared in a letter of the "ark and shechinah" order, which appeared in *The New York Herald* during the early part of 1878, that the future belonged to Mr. Tilden. Mr. Marble's Florida "danger signals" had not yet been found out. When pusillanimity becomes a virtue Mr. Tilden perhaps may have a future. But the American people have had quite enough of the self-consecrated soldier. The future belongs to no man in this country. That was proved on a memorable occasion thirty-three years ago.

In the Presidential compaign of 1844, James K. Polk and Henry Clay were the rival standard bearers of the Democratic and Whig parties. The contest was a desperate one. Young men who had just reached their majority, and old men past ninety, flocked to the polls with the great body of the citizens. The

largest vote ever polled up to that time was given. Lamartine's saying that "politics are in the blood" was fully verified. The Whigs, who had carried the country by storm in 1840, were so confident of victory that great meetings were called in the chief cities of the Union on the night of the election, to celebrate the triumph of Mr. Clay as soon as tidings should come in to confirm the sanguine hopes of his party.

Never was there such a revulsion as the news caused when it was announced that James K. Polk had carried the day and Harry of the West was defeated. Daniel Webster was at Faneuil Hall to address a monster meeting of enthusiastic Whigs. He had stumped the State of Pennsylvania for Clay, and had only a few days before returned from the exciting campaign, filled with high hopes. He spoke just after the astounding news had been received of Clay's defeat, and, although he made a grand appeal to his dispirited friends not to lose heart, and declared "though the field be lost, all is not lost," it required all the power even of a Webster to infuse the slightest spirit into the stunned and dejected Whigs.

But the followers of Mr. Clay did not give up the struggle. They insisted, especially in the States of New York and Louisiana, that he had carried both States—New York alone was sufficient to secure his election,—that the returns had been tampered with, and the verdict of the people reversed. Specific charges of fraud were preferred in the case of St. Lawrence County and in that of Jefferson County, New York, and also in that of the district or parish of Plaquemines, Louisiana. Less specific but persistent allegations that frauds had been committed in New York city were also made by the defeated Whigs. "That these frauds were stupendous is now well known," says Nathan Sargent in the second volume of his "Public Men and Events." Resistance was talked of by the Hotspurs of the Whig party, and Horace Greeley thundered through the columns of the *Tribune* that a rigid investigation should be made, and that, if made, it would show Henry Clay had been counted out by fraud. The Democrats repelled these charges with indignation, but the Whigs reiterated them with greater vehemence. William D. Lewis, of Philadelphia, wrote to Mr. Clay on the 30th of November, and said: "The glorious and beneficial result has been prevented through wicked, unprincipled men, by frauds on the elective franchise as monstrous as they are unprecedented."

Sargent S. Prentiss, the famous Whig orator, on the 15th of December, wrote as follows: "The Whig party is really stronger now than it has been

since the time of Washington. We have been beaten by the basest frauds and corruption."

Charles Francis Adams has spoken in more recent days of "fraud first triumphant in American history" in 1876, but his father took a different view of the matter, for in a letter to Mr. Clay, dated Washington, Jan. 4, 1845, John Quincy Adams said: "The unexpected and inauspicious issue of the recent Presidential election has been on many accounts painful to me; on none more or so much so as on the dark shade which it has cast upon our prospects of futurity. But the glaring frauds by which the election was consummated afford a sad presentiment of what must be expected hereafter." Chief-Justice Ambrose Spencer of New York, in a letter to Mr. Clay, written from Albany, Nov. 21, 1844, summed up what he considered to be the causes of the defeat, and said: "Another cause was the utter mendacity, frauds and villainies of Locofocoism. This untoward event has produced universal gloom and has shaken public confidence." John R. Thompson wrote to Mr. Clay in the following strain:

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, April 8, 1845.

* * * "I cannot tell you, sir, the sense of desolation and crushed hopes with which the painful intelligence of your defeat was received. Frauds the most infamous in the annals of the elective franchise stifled the voice of the people, and national disgrace was effected by a motley party of Doverites and Agrarians, Mormons and Repudiators, the voters of Plaquemine and the outlaws of the Empire Club."

From one end of the land to the other these charges were repeated by Whig politicians, Whig statesmen, and Whig editors. I believe the charges were groundless, and that President Polk was fairly elected. Yet it is perfectly evident on an examination of the history of those times, that the whole Whig party of the United States honestly thought Clay was defrauded out of the Presidency in 1844, and that the returns in the parish of Plaquemines, Louisiana, and in the counties of Jefferson and St. Lawrence, New York, and in the city of New York, were severally manipulated or "bulldozed," to use a modern expression, in order to effect his defeat. Horace Greeley led off with the "fraud cry," and kept it up with fierce and irresistible eloquence in his paper during the ensuing four years. The future belongs to Henry Clay, he declared, and the next National Convention of the Whig party will renominate the old ticket by acclamation. The Whig

press throughout the Union echoed the sentiments of Mr. Greeley, and predicted that the future belonged to Clay and Frelinghuysen. Mr. Manton Marble could scarcely have been posted in American political history when he declared in the letter he wrote to the editor of the New York *Herald*, about the close of 1877 or beginning of 1878, that the future belongs to Mr. Tilden.

But the country has seen a more distinguished gentleman than Marble, Mr. Charles Francis Adams, fly in the face of his own father's assertion when he said that fraud was first triumphant in our history in the Presidential election of 1876. John Quincy Adams had said, thirty odd years before, it was by "glaring frauds" that the election of 1844 was consummated. High-sounding pragmatic assertions should not be made until the whole field has been surveyed, and positive knowledge of the entire subject is acquired. I commend these gentlemen to a closer study of American history. For the four years, from 1844 to 1848, the Whig press and leaders expended an enormous amount of wrath in denouncing the Democratic party on account of the alleged frauds whereby the illustrious Mill-Boy of the Slashes had been deprived of the Presidential office. His renomination alone, declared these gentlemen, will satisfy the country. His overwhelming election would follow as an inevitable consequence.

When we look back at the history and the men of those times it is found that there was a great deal in Henry Clay to justify this devotion of his followers, and to render their predictions of his renomination in 1848 very likely to be fulfilled. He was the idol of millions, and never was man more worthy of popular love. "The life of Mr. Clay," said Mr. Breckinridge in the House of Representatives about the time of Clay's death, "is a striking example of the abiding fame which surely awaits the direct and candid statesman. The entire absence of equivocation or disguise in all his acts was his master-key to the popular heart. He never paltered in a double sense. The country never was in doubt as to his opinions or his purposes. In all the contests of his time his position on great public questions was as clear as the sun in a cloudless sky."

Can it be imagined any one will speak in this way of Mr. Tilden? What a source of pride it would be to Democrats at this day if they could borrow Mr. Breckinridge's just tribute to Henry Clay, and truthfully apply it to Mr. Tilden. But, unfortunately, it would be the refinement of satire to describe him as the "direct and candid statesman." What an inestimable advantage it might prove to the Democratic party if any one could stand up in the face of an approving world and declare that the "absence of equivocation or dis-

guise" in Samuel J. Tilden "was his master-key to the popular heart:" that he never paltered in a double sense," or that "his position on public questions was as clear as the sun in a cloudless sky."

A distinguished sojourner in Washington, who described himself as a "temporary observer" of events which were transpiring at the Federal Capital during the memorable winter of 1876–77, thus expressed himself in the New York *Herald* of Feb. 22, 1877:

"Men found themselves compelled to believe that, if not Mr. Tilden, yet men very near his person, had been engaged in a disgusting intrigue. The whole course of the Oregon investigation covered Mr. Tilden's reputation with slime, yet he never seemed to see it. Democrats saw with indignant shame Tilden's nephew, Col. Pelton, refusing to answer proper questions, and increasing the suspicion of many by his vulgar mysteries, and witness after witness refusing to answer, until at last the deciphered telegrams showed up the case and filled every decent Democrat with disgust. The young men who came here of late as his personal representatives and familiars had the art to make themselves cordially disliked by the wiser men of the party here by their interference and a kind of 'bumptiousness' which was supposed to represent their master's tone and ideas. * * * What strikes me is that the 'tone,' the moral standard, so to speak, of the Democratic party here, is different from and much higher than Mr. Tilden's, or that of the people who seem most directly and closely to represent him. The Democratic party has in both Houses at this time a considerable number of men whom it is not flattery to call statesmen—men of high principle, and a nice sense of honor, of patriotic desires for the country's good; men above all trickery, as well as above mere self-seeking. The atmosphere in which they live is clean and clear. I do not wish to be offensive to Mr. Tilden or his personal surroundings; but it has seemed to me that he and they live on a lower plane. When one comes among them he is impressed—I can hardly tell how or why—with a feeling that here are secrets and cipher dispatches and mysteries which, perhaps, an honorable man would rather know nothing about."

I may remark that this was written before the investigation by a Democratic Congressional Committee had yet taken place of the Cipher Dispatches, and wholesale attempts in South Carolina and Florida at bribery and corruption by Smith Weed, Manton Marble, Col. Pelton, C. F. MacLean and others among Mr. Tilden's familiars. All this was not yet dreamed of by the American people.

"The entire absence of equivocation or disguise in all his acts," said Breckinridge of Henry Clay, "was his master-key to the popular heart." The Whigs with their "defrauded" candidate of 1844 undoubtedly had the advantage over the Democrats with their "defrauded" candidate of 1876. For four years the Mill-Boy of the Slashes and his wrongs formed the burden of the Whig battle cry in their newspapers, in their political meetings and State Conventions, and on the floor of Congress. Horace Greeley was grand in his wrath, and Mr. Dana, who has taken up the same cry and ventilates Mr. Tilden's grievance in our times, would do well to read up and model himself on the philippics which his old chief, the Philosopher of the White Hat, used to hurl forth on behalf of the Whig claimant from 1844 to 1848. Mr. Dana will find the detonation of the Whig Jupiter somewhat of an improvement on his own; perhaps a difference in the claimants accounts for it. *Licet nobis magna componere parvis.* In the "Homes of American Statesmen," here is the way Mr. Greeley described Ashland, the home of Clay:

"That house, that lawn, with the ample and fertile farm stretching a mile or more in the distance behind them, are hallowed to the hearts of his countrymen by the fact that here lived and loved, enjoyed and suffered, aspired and endured, the orator, the patriot, the statesman, the illustrious, the gifted, the fiercely slandered, the fondly idolized Henry Clay."

Well, what does history tell us was the grand climacteric of Mr. Clay's grievance? The Whigs having declared that the future belonged to the Mill-Boy of the Slashes, of course they nominated him over again at their next National Convention, and bore him triumphantly into the White House? He had been kept out, said John Quincy Adams, by "glaring frauds" in 1844. Surely, Messieurs Whigs, you do not mean to "condone the great fraud" in 1848? By no means. The Whig Convention met at Philadephia in the month of June. Clay had ninety-seven of the delegates, but that was not nearly enough to nominate him. An exciting scene was witnessed in the Convention. The friends of the great orator declared that Clay had led the party, vitalized it and made it great; that he had been elected President of the United States four years before, and that by fraud he had been counted out of his seat. "Do you mean to betray Henry Clay in this the house of his friends, and in this the hour for his rightful vindication?"

In answer to these fierce appeals, it was said that no man's personal wrongs can bind a party or, can be regarded as entailing political obligations. The wrongs complained of, said the opponents of Clay, and the frauds by which

we lost the last Presidential election, were not practised against the man, were not leveled at Henry Clay, but against the Whig party and the whole people. They would have taken place all the same whether Clay, or Corwin, or Webster, or any other man had been the candidate. The candidate was a mere accident in the infliction of the wrong. The blow was aimed at the Whig party, and the Whig party—the real sufferer—must be allowed to redress the wrong in its own way. Having been as great a wrong to every other Whig in the United States as to the candidate, every other Whig must be given an equal voice with him in deciding by what means and with what candidate that wrong shall be redressed. Personal considerations must not be permitted to trammel or embarrass the great question, for they are but formal and incidental, and not in any sense an essential part of the grievance. To admit the opposite view would be to introduce claimants, the offspring of European despotism, into the politics of free America. To recognize the principle that any man has a lien on the Presidency is but another mode for establishing the dynastic principle in a Constitutional, Democratic Government. No War of the Roses can be tolerated here.

And the friends of Mr. Clay could not answer this argument. The hopeless struggle was continued for a few hours longer, and then the balloting was commenced. On the first ballot Taylor received 111 votes; Clay, 97, Scott, 43; Webster, 22. Necessary for a choice, 171. On the fourth ballot 65 of the Clay men went over in a body to Taylor, and he was nominated, the vote standing Taylor, 171; Clay, 32; Scott, 63; Webster, 13.

After the defeat of Henry Clay, the idol of his party, the claimant with a grievance, in which grievance all the Whigs had expressed for four years their noisy sympathy, it seems to me that any one who reflects must conclude that what the illustrious Mill-Boy of the Slashes could not accomplish, Samuel J. Tilden, the syndicate lawyer of Wall street will not be likely to secure.

V.

HIS CAREER—A CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORY.

"The defeat of Mr. Wright in the fall of 1846," says Mr. Tilden's authorized biographer, "and the coolness which had grown up between the friends of President Polk and the friends of the late President Van Buren, resulted, fortunately for Mr. Tilden, if not for the country, in withdrawing his attention from politics and concentrating it upon his profession. * * Mr. Tilden now gave himself up to his profession. * * He has associated his name imperishably with some of the most remarkable forensic struggles of our time." —(Cook's Life of Tilden, pp. 55–56.) The words "if not for the country" in the above paragraph are open to very grave doubt, but let that pass.

Did not the biographer have a prompter at his elbow when he thus unceremoniously hurried Mr. Tilden out of politics in 1846, and kept him out for the succeeding twenty years? I think so. It did not suit his hero to take the public into his confidence after 1846. But the truth of history cannot be suppressed by a campaign romance, no matter how ingeniously related. Mr. Tilden never had been so active in politics at any prior time as he became in 1848, two years after his biographer dismisses him out of politics to the law. Moreover the gentleman is not a great lawyer at all, but only a crafty and unscrupulous railroad attorney, as I will presently show. He knows more about first and second mortgages and the construction or wrecking process than he does about the Rule in Shelley's Case, and the difference between an executory devise and a contingent remainder.

I propose to prove in the present letter that this man on account of his treachery became an outcast from the Democratic party, and having shipwrecked his political fortunes by bolting at the National Democratic Convention of Baltimore in 1848, his retirement to private life was not voluntary but enforced, and attended with the greatest discredit to himself. For twenty years after his treason to Cass and Butler, Mr. Tilden was never trusted and had no place in Democratic councils. He got back at last when Tweed was in power, for although stranded on the beach as a political mariner he had made in the meantime a great deal of money in railroad jobs and speculations, and when the Ring held sway he regained his lost position in politics by means of his money. As I am relating facts and not inventing fictions, a brief backward glance into political history is necessary.

At the close of the second term of James Monroe in 1824 the "era of good feeling" which theretofore had prevailed began to disappear and soon passed away. The impartial historian will ascribe the chief blame to the old Albany Regency for the sectional animosities which followed. The seeds of the war between the North and the South were then being sowed. Silas Wright was rising into power and place, and being a man of strong practical sense and downright leadership he steadied and directed the Machiavellian genius of Martin Van Buren. As long as Wright lived his beneficial influence over the restless "Little Magician" was never entirely lost. He could not prevent the intrigue of 1824 whereby Van Buren, then a strong Crawford man and a sleepless enemy of Jackson, split the New York Democrary into a Crawford faction and a Jackson faction, which eventuated in a failure to elect the President by the people, and the transfer of the contest to the House of Representatives. There both Jackson and Crawford were defeated by what John Randolph with unjustifiable asperity called a "union between the Puritan and the blackleg," and John Quincy Adams was chosen President. As soon as Van Buren began to discover there was more magic in the name of Jackson than in that of Crawford, he felt it was his privilege as a professional magician to throw over the latter, and join in the chorus to Old Hickory. He became a strong Jackson man. He was nominated and elected Governor of New York on a Jackson ticket. When the hero became President he appointed Van Buren to the head of his Cabinet. Then for the first time (1829) was transferred to Washington that spirit of intrigue which had so long been the curse of New York politics. Van Buren, who originally had opposed the war of 1812, a Southern measure, now began to veer around to the South and to talk ardently in season and out of season of Southern rights. He became what John Randolph and John C. Calhoun called a "Northern man with Southern principles," and Arthur Tappan and John Quincy Adams with more bluntness nicknamed a "doughface." Be that as it may, the South built up the fortunes of Martin Van Buren and made him President. His career was not yet over. He put away money, got rich, and didn't draw his salary, as the story runs, until the end of his term, and then went to the Treasury with a cart and took away his hundred thousand dollars in gold to Kinderhook. There he sat down in Dutch contentment, and smoked his pipe under his own vine and fig-tree; for he was rich and great and had trod all the paths of glory, thanks to Peggy O'Neil and Andrew Jackson and the generous South, and who had a better right to smoke

his great Knickerbocker in peace and wax fat and jolly, than the "Northern man with Southern principles?"

It is a melancholy fact that Regency intrigues dominated the first Cabinet of Jackson. Van Buren the "Little Magician" had brought his Albany arts along with him. Talk about wire-pulling and log-rolling, and single and double cuts, and the whole legerdemain of politics, ah! then they flourished with a vengeance. Tricks were trumps, and Bellona (Mrs. Eaton) and Van Buren were the Court favorites. General Jackson drew the line at Bellona, and swore a valiant oath that anybody who was not willing to hurrah for her, should not be allowed to hurrah for Jackson. The Little Magician, fomenter of Cabinet strife and scandal, was a widower and enjoyed the fun like Harlequin. All this occurred in the administration circles of a Democratic President famous for his republican simplicity, and not in the French Court of Louis XV., infamous for its Pompadours and debauchees. The inimitable side-splitting cartoons of Major Jack Downing were drawn to the life. That scene at the Dance, after Jackson and his fair partner had romped themselves down and the worn-out hero had gone to bed, when little Mattie and two or three others went on tip-toe to his sleeping room and got the "Ginral's" clothes, was one hardly inferior to Hogarth. Each Cabinet member tried on the clothes, hat and all, but Little Mattie, who was lost in them, insisted that they fitted him the best, while the coat-tails went trailing a yard or more along the floor, and the hat covered his whole face and neck, and rested well down on his shoulders. Tom Nast has never equalled that stroke.

But, whether the "Ginral's" clothes fitted him or not Mattie became President. Then with his intrigues and pipe-laying and rowing one way and looking the other, he broke up the Democratic party into half a dozen factions. What Jackson had built up, Van Buren pulled down. Calhoun was right after all when he said in the Senate just before Jackson's retirement, that if any one expected the Court nominee to play the role of Jackson, he would be wofully disappointed. Jackson, he said, had courage—firmness, and was bold, warlike and audacious. He had terminated the war gloriously at New Orleans. Van Buren had none of these recommendations. "He is not of the race of the lion or the tiger," exclaimed the illustrious Senator from South Carolina; "he belongs to a lower order—the fox and the weazel."

The full power of Van Buren's genius for mischief was not felt until the next Presidential election. Then it came like a whirlwind when "Maine went hell-bent for Governor Kent," and the victory of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too"

sent Little Mattie, a wiser if not a better man, back to the shades of Kinderhook. It now began to dawn on him that the Democratic party had quite made up its mind to leave him at home in peaceful retirement for the remainder of his days. The statesmen of the party felt they could not stand another four years of Van Buren without submitting to the inevitable ruin of the Democracy. Then Mattie flew out from his retreat, and sent Benjamin F. Butler here, and Prince John there, and Samuel J. Tilden his little New Lebanon protege thitherward, to pull the wires and skirmish up and down and disintegrate the Democratic party in the Empire State. How well they accomplished the work let their bolt at Baltimore in 1848 attest; let Tilden's Soft-shell or disunion candidacy and overwhelming defeat for Attorney-General of New York in 1855 eloquently attest it. Mr. Tilden has ever proved himself a bolter and backslider. He was one of the Secret Circular men in 1844 who tried so hard to defeat Polk. He openly opposed Cass in 1848. He was secretly opposed to Pierce and gave him a halting half-hearted support in 1852. In 1856 he sympathized with Fremont who carried the State of New York, and he skulked in Wall street while Democrats were battling for Buchanan. In 1860 he wrote a Van Burenish letter to Judge Kent, in which he declared the bolt of 1848 was a "mere protest," and that his own "personal wish" at that time had been against it, an assertion which I shall prove before I close this letter to be one of the most reckless and unmitigated misstatements ever uttered by any human being in the world. And I shall prove this not only by the two chief witnesses, Van Buren (1) and Adams (2), the Free Soil candidates in 1848 for President and Vice-President, and by Daniel Webster and Thomas H. Benton (3), but I shall prove it out of the mouth of Samuel J. Tilden himself. The extinction of African slavery is one of the greatest blessings not only to the negro race but to the white race on this continent which Providence has ever vouchsafed to us. But in making up the record for history, it is important that only the truth be told, and that the fictions and inventions of trading politicians be exposed and refuted. Now notwithstanding the Kent letter, its author was in Washington during the war consorting at the War Department with his old crony of Van Buren times Simon Cameron, and afterwards with Edwin M. Stanton. The medicine house of the Tildens at New Lebanon soon had fat contracts, and Cameron and Stanton each was the recipient of Samuel J. Tilden's most courteous attentions. On one occasion the rival army contractors set a Congressional Committee on the track of a certain "Fluid Extract of Coffee" furnished by the Tilden's, and old Simon Cameron and old Samuel J. Tilden

combined, had as much as they could do to prevent the order for the Coffee from being cancelled and the whole immense lot from being thrown back upon the hands of the Tildens. It is safe to assume that this Coffee was not exactly Maracaibo or a prime article of Old Government Java. I forbear to tell how the Tildens worked that Coffee through. Professor Henry of the Smithsonian Institute is now dead, and I think Dr. Gross of Philadelphia is also dead. If alive they would enjoy a quiet laugh at this reminiscence. But Simon Cameron is still here, and if ever he sees these pages he will certainly recall the Tilden Coffee.

I have made three statements in this letter which I shall now proceed to establish by historical proof.

1st. Samuel J. Tilden is not a great lawyer but merely a railroad attorney. Here is what Mr. John McKeon, a lawyer of distinction at the New York bar, said on this subject in 1876. I quote from a paper now in my possession prepared by Mr. McKeon. "It has been said by one of Mr. Tilden's biographers that his income from his law business was never less than $25,000 and reached up to $50,000 *per annum*. Was this made from legitimate law business? Mr. Tilden has had no practice at the New York bar. He has devoted himself to manipulating railroad corporations. His supporters are men engaged in the same business. He is the representative of the monoply system which has assumed such gigantic proportions within the past quarter of a century. He represents fully 'the growing spirit of monopolies, a spirit which stops at nothing in order to accomplish its purposes. It uses money in order to corrupt individuals, to corrupt legislators and to open a pathway to the polls.' Mr. Tilden has devoted his life to the promotion of the interests of incorporated associated wealth. His time and talents have for years been given exclusively to advancing the interests of these cormorant associations. He has been their attorney. He has been their lobby agent and adviser before the Legislatures of the Western, North Western, and South Western States. He has received the fees of Jim Fisk for the Erie Road at the rate of $10,000 for a retainer. This was not paid him for his legal attainments, but because he had political influence and at that time he found it convenient and serviceable to co-operate with Tweed and Company." [Let me suspend my quotation from Mr. McKeon's statement for a moment, simply to add the following extract in corroboration of it taken from New York Assembly, Document No. 98 for 1873. The item in the Legislative Document was copied from the books of the Erie Railroad. Here it is: "Samuel J. Tilden, January to February, 1869—Legal Services—$20,000." It is but just to

add that Mr. Tilden afterwards declared he had only received $10,000 of this money, for services during February 1869.] Mr. McKeon continues as follows: "Last February (1876) an action was commenced against Tilden and others by the St. Louis, Alton and Terre Haute Railroad Company charging improper conversion by Tilden and his associates of hundreds of thousands of dollars represented by bonds which got into Tilden's and his associates' possession. Although he was served with process four months since no answer has yet been put in (June 1876) by Tilden." [Again let me interrupt Mr. McKeon's narrative in order to corroborate it. For years Mr. Tilden denied he owed the St. Louis, Alton and Terre Haute Company the money which that Company charged him with having fraudulently converted to his own use. The claim amounted to $400,000. Having with three others held this property for many years without expressing any intention of returning it to its rightful owners, the latter determined to proceed against Tilden and the three others for $1,000,000 on the grounds that the principal and increase of said property during the long period it had been withheld would fairly amount to that enormous sum. The Company notified Tilden and his associates that if the $400,000 was not paid by them on or before the 31st of December 1879, the $1,000,000 suit would be commenced. On the last day of grace Mr. Tilden swallowed all his denials of the past and came forward with his associates and restored to the Company its $400,000, Mr. Tilden himself paying $100,000 of the same. The final decree of Judge Blatchford reciting the facts of payment and dismissal of the suit in consideration thereof, was filed on the 30th of January, 1880, in the Clerk's office of the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York, where it may be seen by any one who wishes to learn how Mr. Tilden and his associates saved $600,000 by making restitution of $400,000.]

Mr. McKeon further says: "To show that Mr. Tilden is no lawyer, I refer to the undoubted fact, that with the exception of the case of Flagg against Giles, which involved the question of fact as to false counting of ballots, he has tried but two or three cases before a jury in over 40 years practice. As Corporation Attorney of the City of New York about 34 years ago he prosecuted parties for some penalties and was beaten, although he had all the law and the facts on his side. He never had another case until Mr. O'Conor associated him in the Flagg case. In the hundreds of volumes of Law Reports of the State of New York, Mr. Tilden's name does not appear but twice; once in the case of Mrs. Cunningham before the Surrogate of New York, when he made an argument on the facts of eighteen pages, and in which not a single au-

thority was cited from any law book. The other case was in the Court of Appeals against the Ring, when he and Mr. O'Conor failed in convincing that tribunal. Tilden's legal reputation amounts to nothing."

I do not think it necessary to add another word to the statement of Mr. McKeon, a gentleman who is the senior of Mr. Tilden, and has spent a life-time in the practice of law in New York.

2d. Mr. Tilden has one rule from which he has never been known to depart, he has no friendships and works always for himself. A selfish man without loyalty to his own convictions sometimes may cover up that defect to a certain extent by loyalty to his personal followers. But Mr. Tilden's ethics are not of this kind. Life is a game of chess with him, and he plays his pieces on the cynical theory that every man has his price. I do not think there is a single person in the United States who follows his fortunes out of love for the man. There is one thing, however, in which he does believe; he has sublime faith in printer's ink. As an astute manipulator of the newspaper and political tract it may be doubted whether Van Buren himself was Tilden's equal.

Who, for example beyond the limits of New York really knows anything about the true relations between Tilden and Tweed at the time the latter was in power? Every one has somehow come to suppose the former was a fierce enemy of the latter in those evil days. In point of fact, this is but one of the many delusions Tilden has palmed off on the public at large through the necromancy of printer's ink. An electioneering circular of a fraudulent nature bearing the signature of S. J. Tilden, was sent out through the State of New York by the Ring men in November, 1868. Horace Greeley addressed Tilden a letter on the 20th of October, 1869, (see the *Tribune*), in which he spoke thus plainly: "You were at least a passive accomplice in the giant frauds of last November. * * On the principle that the 'receiver is as bad as the thief,' you are as deeply implicated in them to-day as though your name were Tweed, O'Brien or Oakey Hall." In the paper written by Mr. John McKeon, from which I have before quoted, that gentleman further uses these words: "Mr. Tilden's claim for a reformer is answered by stating that he was the friend and supporter of Tweed and Company, so long as it was to his advantage, and he never attacked the Ring until it had received a deadly blow from other hands than those of himself."

Let any one read the rigid cross-examination to which Mr. David Dudley Field in 1876 subjected Mr. Tilden at the time of the trial of the Tweed six million suit, if he has any doubt of the fact that friendly and intimate rela-

tions existed between the two men during the supremacy of the Ring. Tilden's letters to Tweed of a most friendly character, and even Tweed's $5,000 checks, one or more in favor of Chairman Tilden, were fished out of the muddy waters of that mysterious intimacy, and acknowledged by Tilden when the screws of the celebrated cross-examiner were tightened upon him. Yet when the poor, wretched Tweed lay helpless, hopeless and dying in prison, Mr. Tilden in order to protect some of the most guilty members of the Ring from exposure who had become Tilden men, prevented Attorney General Fairchild from accepting Tweed's confession whereby millions of dollars might have been saved to the City of New York. Charles O'Conor who had really crushed the Ring favored the acceptance of this confession. But it would have interfered with Mr. Tilden's political schemes, and so he pursued Tweed like a sleuth-hound to the end. A few moments before his death, Tweed feebly turned his head on the pillow and said with a sad smile to the Under-Sheriff who sat near his bed: "I hope Mr. Tilden is satisfied, he has killed me at last."

But as I mean to verify my facts I here add a literal transcript of Tilden's testimony on cross-examination in the Tweed suit above referred to, which I have taken from vol. 2 of the official stenographer's report of the trial. Let the reader remember that he was under oath when he testified to the following tell-tale facts:

Cross-Examination of Tilden by Field in the Six Million Suit:

Q. When did your acquaintance with Mr. Tweed begin?

A. I really can't tell. I knew him slightly sometime while he was Street Commissioner.

Q. From that time did your acquaintance with him increase?

A. Perhaps so.

Q. How, in fact?

A. I should think I knew him rather more afterwards than I did the first year or two of my acquaintance with him. I never knew him much.

Q. Your relations were not at all close then?

A. No; never.

Q. They were rather distant I suppose?

A. Well, they were reserved.

Q. During the period of his power I think you said he was not a member of the Democratic National Committee?

A. Never, I think.

Q. Look at that letter, and tell me on what occasion it was written (producing a paper to the witness).

Mr. Carter. Is it an original letter?

Mr. Field. An original letter from Mr. Tilden to Mr. Tweed asking him to attend the National Democratic Committee or Convention.

The Witness. It does not ask him to do anything of the kind.

Q. We will see what it is, at all events.

A. The best way to ascertain what it is is to read.

Counsel reads the letter in evidence in the words following:

"My Dear Sir--The National Committee meet at the Metropolitan Hotel in Washington on the 25th of February at 12 o'clock.

Yours, &c.,

S. J. TILDEN."

"Hon. WILLIAM M. TWEED."

Q. What is the word there before the date?

A. Saturday morning. I think February 15th, 1868.

Q. Will you state for what purpose if he was not a member of that Committee you wrote him that note?

A. I remember Mr. Belmont, who was President of the National Committee, pressed me very strongly to go on there in 1868, to attend the meeting on the 8th of January and I did it. I presume Mr. Tweed must have asked me to send him word when that meeting would take place or something of that sort, and I did it. I have no recollection now.

Q Look at that note, also, and see if it is a note you wrote to him? (producing a paper to the witness.)

A. That appears to be my handwriting.

Q. I will read it.

Defendant's counsel reads the letter in evidence in the words following:

"GRAMERCY PARK,

August 12,

11 A.M. 1866.

"My Dear Sir—I decided to go to Philadelphia in the morning, and shall not be able to see you before I leave. Mr. Richmond is at the St. Nicholas,

somewhat ill. If well enough he will come on the 2 P.M. train. Whether he is there to-day or not, I hope you will not fail to be in Philadelphia.

Very truly, your friend,

S. J. TILDEN."

"Hon. Wm. M. Tweed."

Q. That you perceive is in 1866, August 12th, so at that time you must have been in relations with him; at all events that would justify such a correspondence. While I am about it, I will show you another letter, and ask if that is one you wrote to him? (producing another paper to witness.)

A. That is my handwriting.

The letter is shown to the plaintiff's counsel, after which it is read by defendant's counsel in the words following:

"Hon. W. M. Tweed:

"My Dear Sir—I beg to present to your attention, the case of Mr. Samuel Allen, a very old friend of ours, who is in great need of a small appointment under your department, for which he has applied. He would be content with something, for a time, of not a very high rank. You know him so well that I need add nothing. He used to be a very efficient and useful worker, and is an entirely reliable man, and I should be personally glad if you could help him.

"Truly Yours,

"S. J. TILDEN."

Q. Were you chairman of the Democratic State Committee for a long period?

A. I became chairman in 1866.

Q. And continued so up to what time?

A. Up to 1874.

Q. During that time was Mr. Tweed frequently consulted, and applied to for contributions to the Committee?

A. Not very much.

Q. Did he make large contributions to that committee while you were at its head?

A. He did not.

Q. Did he ever make any?

A. I suppose he made some.

Q. Did he make any through you?

A. Very little, if at all.

Q. Any—do you remember any?

A. I do not remember. I remember the general fact. I should think if during the whole period, he would make an account to the Committe, it would be found that he had made more bills against it than contributions to it.

Q. He made more bills against it than contributions to it?

A. Mr. Tweed did not get to be a rich man until quite lately.

Q. I will come to that by and by. Is that one of the checks that passed through your hands at that time? (producing a check to the witness.)

A. That is a check in 1868.

Q. Is it a check that passed through your hands at that time?

A. It appears so.

Q. Was there another check of the same amount?

A. I do not remember.

Q. Will you not say whether there was another check?

A. I do not think there was.

The check is offered in evidence, and is marked defendant's exhibit, February 28, 1876 and is in the words following:

"NEW YORK, September 8, 1868.

"The National Broadway Bank will pay to the order of William M. Tweed, five thousand dollars.

"WILLIAM M. TWEED."

Endorsed. "Pay S. J. Tilden or order William M. Tweed. For deposit in the North America. S. J. TILDEN."

Q. Will you refresh your memory and say whether or not you can recall the fact that he did at or about that time, give to you for the same purpose another check for the same amount?

A. I cannot say, but I do not think he did." This is enough.

3d. I will proceed now to show that Mr. Tilden is not an orthodox Democrat. I do not wish to use harsh or denunciatory language, but there is overwhelming evidence to prove that he made a labored attempt to pervert the truth of history in framing excuses for his conduct at the time of the Free Soil bolt of 1848, when he joined the Massachusetts disunonists. In his ably written but disingenuous letter to Judge William Kent of October 26th, 1860, he used the following language: "I never held any opinion which could justify either the policy or the organization of the Republican party." (This was in reply to the *Evening Post* which had truthfully charged that he had once held such an

opinion). "If I had done so," he continues, with a propitiatory eye on the South, "I should not hesitate to frankly renounce so grave an error. I admit consistency to be a quality which inspires confidence. But I do not consider it so great a virtue as a fixed purpose to do right and a single modification in a man's opinions on one of the question which have occupied the public mind during the period of twenty-five years ought not to shake an established character for consistency. *But, in truth, I never adopted the doctrine of absolute and universal exclusion, by federal legislation, of slavery from all territories, and still less that of the exclusion of new slave States;* or the philosophical theories on which the doctrines are founded. * * The division in the Democratic party of this State in 1848, bears no analogy to the Republican organization of to-day. It would not have happened *except for what was deemed to be a violation of the right of representation in a National Convention, and the division was the year after composed, while the slavery question was still unsettled. Wise or unwise, right or wrong, it was in substance a mere protest. It is known that my personal wish then was that its form should not have gone beyond its true practical character.*" Italics mine.

Horace Greeley had no sooner read the letter, from which the preceding is an extract, than he pierced Mr. Tilden through and through in the following effective manner.

(From the *New York Tribune*, November 5th, 1860).

"There have been a great many queer phenomena in the Presidential canvass, such for instance as the forgery of J. M. Wilson's speech in the *Courier Des Etats Unis*, and the appearance of George Briggs as the advocate of Gen. Ward; but the humor of the thing wasn't perfect till Mr. Samuel J. Tilden printed a letter to the Hon. William Kent. * * Mr. Tilden is an aged man, and we wish to treat him with all decorous veneration; but will he allow us respectfully to suggest that when he merely desires to be pathetic and impressivo, he will do well to avoid falling into the broad farce of inane and insane suggestion. Mr. Tilden was one of those Anti-Slavery Democrats who in 1848 defeated and crushed Gen. Cass, because he would not go with them for the Wilmot proviso.

"In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave and follies of the wise;
From Marlbroughs eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveler and a show."

So Horace Greeley not only stripped the mask from the political weathercock, but described him as "an aged man" twenty years ago.

Let the reader keep distinctly in mind the extract I have just quoted from Mr. Tilden's letter to Judge Kent, and he will soon find how completely its statements shall be refuted, not only by others, but by Mr. Tilden himself. One of the efficient causes of the terrible civil war was the bolt, and its consequences, on the part of the Van Buren faction at the National Democratic Convention of Baltimore in 1848. Among the chief disorganizers of that day were Preston King, Samuel J. Tilden, Lucius Robinson, and John Van Buren. After their bolt, Mr. Tilden and his associates returned to New York and issued the following anti-democratic manifesto. It was first published in the *New York Herald* of June 7, 1848. As this extaordinary document has not seen the light for thirty-two years, every copy that could be obtained having been destroyed by its authors soon after its publication, I here reproduce it in full. It will be observed that Mr. Tilden then denounced the resolution requiring the New York delegates to pledge their support to the candidate of the National Convention as a condition precedent to their admission to seats. At the present day he insists upon this very same pledge with as much zeal as he formerly displayed in opposing it.

TILDEN'S BOLTING MANIFESTO OF 1848.

"To the Democracy of the County and State of New York.

"In behalf of your delegates to the Baltimore Convention we render an account of the manner in which they have discharged their duty, and of the conduct of the Convention towards the State of New York. We found at Baltimore certain gentlemen, known as Conservatives, contesting our seats. Knowing that they were not sent there by the Democracy of our State, nor according to any recognized usage of the party, their first object was to have your delegates rejected without the examination of their credentials. Accordingly, prior to the meeting of the Convention, the Conservatives, with some of the friends of General Cass and of the Southern delegates, consulted together, and resolved to bar the door of the Convention against your representatives, by proposing a test before examining their credentials. The Conservatives designing to pledge themselves into the Convention, met on Monday morning,

and resolved to fulfil their contract with the South. The Committee on Credentials, before even asking for them, proposed a resolution refusing 'to open the discussion, until each party should pledge themselves to abide the decision' of the Convention, and to support its nominees. This extraordinary resolution was denounced by gentlemen, North, South, East and West, as unprecedented and dishonorable. On a division the vote was 14 to 14; but at that critical moment little Delaware appeared and cast her vote to shut and bar the door against the Democracy of the Empire State. Your delegates would have been unworthy to represent you and faithless to the high trust confided to them had they hesitated for an instant to repel an insult to our State, by proposing to us a condition which had not been offered to the delegates of any other State, and which had been repudiated by the Convention.

"They immediately handed in their protest, declaring 'that the delegates of the Democracy of New York must be admitted to the Baltimore Convention unconditionally, or not at all,' and withdrew from the Committee room. The Conservatives took the pledge," (the Conservatives, I may remark, were the party to which Daniel S. Dickinson, Horatio Seymour, James T. Brady, and Charles O'Conor belonged;) "and the Committee resolved, 'that the delegates from the State of New York, designated by the name of the Syracuse and Albany Delegation, are entitled to seats in the Convention.' This extraordinary report was repudiated by the Convention. We were graciously allowed to be heard; but when we offered our credentials objection was made, and they were returned to our Chairman." (This Chairman was Preston King, afterwards Republican Senator from New York, who obtained an unenviable notoriety in Mrs. Surratt's case.) "Not daring to reject us directly, both delegations were admitted, 125 to 124. Great efforts were made by the friends of General Cass to have this vote reconsidered; but it was twice sustained, and finally by 133 to 118. Although this vote disfranchised our State, it was a severe rebuke to the Committee.

"Senator Hannegan, the most active friend of General Cass in the Convention, then made a last effort, by offering the following resolution: 'That the delegates of the Syracuse Convention of New York are rightfully entitled to cast the electoral vote of said State in this Convention.' This, the only direct proposition to admit the Conservatives, was, after another appeal by Senator Dickinson to the South, laid upon the table by the decisive vote of 157 to 95. Thus did the Convention, by a large vote, virtually decide that the Conservatives were not rightfully entitled to cast the vote of our State, and

admit that we were,—for one or the other were unquestionably delegates to the Convention.

"But our credentials, or the justice of our claims, had little to do with the decision of the Baltimore Convention. We were, in effect, rejected on two other grounds,—we were not the friends of General Cass, and we had dared to reaffirm the imperishable principle of Thomas Jefferson, reported in 1784, and voted for unanimously by Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, that slavery should not be extended to free territory. It was repeatedly declared in and out of the Convention, and some of the Southern delegates resolved unanimously that on that ground alone the Utica delegates must be rejected, without regard to the character of our credentials, or the indisputable justice of our cause. Had the patriots of the old Continental Congress from the South been delegates to the Baltimore Convention, they would have been rejected by the modern Democracy of most of the Southern States; nay, had Thomas Jefferson himself appeared, he would have been rejected; aye, even by 'democratic' Virginia." (And yet within two little months the authors of this Address, including Mr. Tilden, were at the Buffalo Convention, with Gerrit Smith, Fred Douglass, and Joshua R. Giddings, tearing to shreds the compromises of the Constitution and laying the foundations of the Republican party.)

"There was no Democracy in New York but the Conservative Democracy, which would accord with the modern Democracy of the South,—no others had any right to send delegates to the Baltimore Convention. The delegates from almost all the non-slaveholding States stood upon the same ground that we did; eleven of them had almost unanimously resolved against extending slavery to free territory, and in favor of non-interference with Southern rights and institutions; but New York must, as in 1844, be sacrificed. The Conservatives have gained their point; they have, by stratagem, kept New York out of the Convention, and have, by that means alone, secured a nomination which never would have been made had it been a full National Convention. Had New York been represented, General Cass could never have been nominated. Another fact stamps the character of the Convention, and of this nomination: while New York was refused her right to cast her 36 votes, a gentleman representing a single parish or town, making one-seventh part of a Congressional district, was allowed to cast the nine votes of South Carolina.

"Our State having been disfranchised, our Democracy insulted, and your delegates virtually uded without even the reception of their credentials,

we declined taking seats in the Baltimore Convention, and resolved on recommending to the Democracy of New York to send delegates to a Convention at Utica on the 22d of June. The Democracy of the Empire State can never with honor support the nominee of a Convention which disfranchises our State; they can never, until they abandon the principles of Thomas Jefferson, vote for any candidate for the Presidency who is pledged to veto any and every bill prohibiting the introduction of slavery into free territory; and they can never, without disgracing themselves, unite with the Conservaties of this State, who have declared in a Convention of the Union that they would never consult, nor act in any manner whatever with the representatives of the Democracy of New York.

"The Baltimore Convention has proclaimed to the world that it can elect its candidate without New York; it has made the issue:—let the old guard respond to this declaration and meet the issue fearlessly and triumphantly now, as they did in 1800, in defending the imperishable principles of Thomas Jefferson.

"We have now discharged our duty, we trust to the satisfaction of every sound and fearless Democrat throughout the State; and we have as delegates but one more duty to perform. We have told you that we presented our credentials to the Convention, and that their reception was objected to. We would not dishonor our State by offering them a second time; and we now, through you, return them to the incorruptible and undaunted Democracy of the Empire State."

[Signed],
"C. C. CAMBRELENG,
JOHN A. KENNEDY,
ROBERT H. MACLAY,
WM. F. HAVEMEYER,
SAMUEL J. TILDEN."

It is not necessary to examine in detail this precious document, which emanated from Mr. Van Buren's predatory faction of office-hunters. How Mr. Tilden, after writing such a tissue of misrepresentations could have had the hardihood to write his Kent letter of October 26, 1860, I leave to that gentleman of fertile resources to explain.

Here is an extract from the latter:

"I never adopted the doctrine of absolute and universal exclusion by

Federal legislation of slavery from all territories, and still less that of the exclusion of new slave States. * * The division was the year after composed while the slavery question was still unsettled."(4)

The Bolters' Convention here recommended by Mr. Tilden was accordingly held at Utica on the 22d of June, 1848. An address was issued by this convention whose authorship was ascribed to Tilden and B. F. Butler. It was written under the supervision of their chief, Martin Van Buren. Here is an extract from it which affords very refreshing reading side by side with Tilden's letter to Kent. "Believing that Congress has the power to prohibit the establishment of slavery in the territories in question (New Mexico and California); convinced that this power should be exercised, and feeling in our inmost hearts that if through the sufferance or by the act of Congress slavery should be engrafted on the institutions of these territories there would be perpetrated the greatest crime which in the middle of the nineteenth century a nation can commit, we pledge ourselves to each other, to our country and to the world that however it may be with others our skirts shall be clear of a guilt so enormous. Not for the fee simple of all the lands to which the question relates; not for the perpetual reversion of all the offices of the Federal Government would we bring upon our souls the weight, or upon our posterity the curse of any voluntary agency in the deed of shame. * * The time has now come when the main question must be met. It can no longer be trifled with, evaded, or postponed." In relation to the two old parties of Whigs and Democrats the address declares: "*The old issues which for the last twenty years have divided them are now settled and set aside; a new issue has been presented in which all minor differences, and in which differences that under other circumstances would be important are merged and swallowed up.*" Italics mine.

Whether Mr. Tilden wrote that spirited address or not, one thing is certain he publicly endorsed it, as the following call proves:

[From the New York *Evening Post*, July 10th, 1848.]

"MARTIN VAN BUREN AND THE FREEDOM OF THE SOIL.—DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN MEETING IN THE PARK.

"The Democratic Republican electors of the City of New York, and all others in favor of the election of Martin Van Buren as President and of the preservation of FREE TERRITORY for FREE LABOR, and opposed to any so-called compromise which surrenders the best portion of the free soil of Mexico and

California to eternal slavery, are requested to meet in the park on Tuesday the 18th day of July inst., at 6 o'clock in the afternoon, to respond to the action of the State Convention held at Utica on the 22nd day of June."

"Several eminent speakers will address the meeting whose names will be hereafter announced.

Signed,

"ISAAC V. FOWLER,
SAMUEL J. TILDEN,
NELSON J. WATERBURY,
JOHN COCHRANE,
LUCIUS ROBINSON,
WM. F. HAVEMEYER," and others.

"*Democratic Republican Corresponding Committee appointed at the meeting in the Park June 6th*, 1848."

And this same Mr. Tilden had the audacity in 1860 to say that the subject of slavery had nothing to do with this movement; that it was a "mere protest," and was against his "personal wish." The bolters did not stop here. Utica was but a stage and resting place in the progress of their treason to the Democracy. They soon struck hands with the Massachusetts abolitionists of the fanatical school, with those in New York of the Gerrit Smith and Fred. Douglass or Liberty Party, and with those in the West who followed the lead of Joshua R. Giddings. The Free Soil Buffalo Convention of the 9th of August, 1848, was the result. In that conclave the Black Republican party of to-day was born. Samuel J. Tilden was a delegate to this Free Soil Convention. Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams were nominated at Buffalo for President and Vice-President. The whole United States was in a roar of laughter at the outcome of the motley gathering. Daniel Webster took up the laugh in a speech at Abington, Massachusetts, on the 9th of October, 1848. "A party has arisen," said the Great Expounder, "which calls itself the Free Soil party. I think there is a good joke by Swift or some writer of his time, who wished to ridicule some one who was making no very tasteful use of the words '*natale solum*.'

'Libertas, et natale solum!
Fine words! I wonder where you stole 'em.'

"Gentlemen, children at school, you know, often amuse themselves in drawing fantastical images, putting the heads of some animals upon the bodies

of others and thus producing resemblances of all monstrous, all prodigious things. Now, I think if one of these juvenile limners had a fancy to try his hand at political caricature, and should draw the Whig party, and put Mr. Van Buren's head upon it—or him at its head rather - he would make an image that would create more laughter than the celebrated Gerrymander."

War on the South was the cry of the Buffalo Convention. The "Northern man with Southern principles" had become the Nemesis predicted by Calhoun, who would yet stab his inventors and benefactors to the heart. He was about to do it. What a spectacle! Martin Van Buren whom the Abolitionsts had denounced and execrated as a "doughface" and traitor to the North, whom the South had lifted upon its great shoulders and carried triumphantly over its own Calhoun into the Presidency, Van Buren had become the standard-bearer in the great anti-Southern crusade, the arch-leader of the Abolition host, the first nominee for President of its first national convention, the precursor of Seward in the "irrepressible conflict" between the North and the South. Cass was defeated and Van Buren and Tilden were satisfied. Seward now stepped forward with the weapons Van Buren had invented for him, and the rest came about with the accelerated progress of cause and effect.

In conclusion, I may remark that Mr. Tilden, a Puritan both on his father's and mother's sides, inherits that hostility to the Cavaliers which he manifested so bitterly in 1848. His political, historical and race sympathies and prejudices are all against the South. His two recognized interpreters, Mr. Charles A. Dana and Mr. Montgomery Blair, are constantly impugning the motives and assailing the conduct of the Southern people. A double-leaded editorial appeared in Mr. Dana's paper, the New York *Sun*, on the 30th of May, 1880, in which it was charged in relation to Mr. Tilden's election as President of the United States, four years ago, that "he was defrauded of the office through a Republican and Secession conspiracy."

Some months ago Mr. Blair published a letter over his own name, in the same paper, in which he declared that Lucius Robinson's defeat, when he ran for Governor of New York last fall, was brought about through a corrupt bargain between the leaders of the Southern Democracy and Mr. John Kelly. This apocryphal bargain was entered into according to Mr. Blair in revenge for Mr. Tilden's anti-Southern war claims letter of 1876. It would be quite easy to find a better reason for it in Mr. Robinson's political record (5). The relations between Messrs. Tilden, Dana, and Blair are of the most confidential character, and the inspiration of these attacks on the South is not far to be sought.

Mr. Jefferson once said that Charles Fenton Mercer was John Adams's residuary legatee in Virginia; Mr. Tilden, I think, is a like legatee of Martin Van Buren in New York. But, however much the plastic hand of Van Buren may have shaped him, he is a Puritan of the Puritans in his hostility to the Cavaliers. Strange when George Washington the Cavalier, was in Massachusetts fighting its battles in the Revolution, that this Puritan's grandfather should have been a Tory (6) who was locked up in Plymouth jail by the Patriots.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1, p. 30. Tildens's Kent letter demolished by his chief. Martin Van Buren devotes the eighth chapter of his work. "Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in the United States," to a discussion of the Dred Scott case and slavery. The right of the Supreme Court to "guide the official action of the Executive and legislative departments of the Government upon a great constitutional question," is thus treated by Mr. Van Buren:

"In the notice I propose to take of that case, it is not my intention to discuss the correctness or incorrectness of the decision that was made in respect to the power of Congress to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the territories. I will, however, state in advance and in few words the view I now take of the general subject.

"The acquiescence of the country in the power of Congress referred to, from the Presidency of Washington to that of Polk inclusive, is well known. Every President signed bills for carrying it into effect, when any such became necessary and were presented for their approval, and the other great departments of the Government not only complied with the rule but in innumerable instances, recognized its validity. This continued until the year 1848, when a point, which had so long been considered settled, was brought in question by an opinion expressed by General Cass, then being a candidate for the Presidency, in a letter to Mr. Nicholson, of Tennessee, adverse to the powers of Congress. *The Democratic party, whose candidate he was, adopted his opinions, and the consequences were a rupture in that party, the elevation of an old school Federalist to the Presidency, and an administration of the Federal Government upon the long exploded principles of Federalism.*"—Pp. 354-55. I have myself made the italics, in order to call particular notice to Mr. Van Buren's flat contradiction of Mr. Tilden's absurd and apologetic explanation of the nature of the bolt or "division" as he calls it of 1848.

NOTE 2, p. 30. Mr. Charles Francis Adams, who was the candidate of the Buffalo Convention for Vice-President, thus points out the real issue of 1848:

"General Taylor had very much distinguished himself by his Mexican campaign, and the Whig party seized the earliest opportunity of enlisting him

in its ranks. * * When it came to this, that we were called to elevate to the highest post of the country, as a reward for his services, a slave-holder, having every possible inducement to perpetuate the evil of which we complained, it proved a heavier load than we could bear. The consequence was a very considerable secession from the (Whig) party, and an effort to bring before the public an independent nomination. This was carried out in what has ever since been remembered as the Buffalo Convention. Simultaneously with this movement, a similar one had been made in the Democratic party, a section of which of considerable force in New York, dissatisfied with the nomination of Lewis Cass, ultimately consented to make a part of the same assembly. The end was the nomination of Mr. Van Buren, and a declaration for the first time of a system of policy distinctly founded upon the true issues agitating the country."—Address on the life of Wm. H. Seward, delivered before the Legislature of New York, April 18th, 1873, by Charles Francis Adams.

NOTE 3, p. 30. Thomas H. Benton the friend and former champion of Van Buren, thus speaks of the Buffalo Convention: "It was an organization entirely to be regretted. Its aspect was sectional—its foundation a single idea. * * Deeming all such organizations, no matter on which side of the question, as fraught with evil to the Union, this writer, on the urgent request of some of his political associates went to New York to interpose his friendly offices to get the Free Soil organization abandoned. But in vain. Mr. Van Buren accepted the nomination, and in so doing, placed himself in opposition to the general tenor of his political conduct in relation to slavery. I deemed this acceptance unfortunate to a degree far beyond its influence upon persons or parties. It went to impair confidence between the North and the South, and to narrow down the basis of party organization to a single idea, and that idea not known to our ancestors as an element in political organizations. * * Mr. Van Buren accepted a nomination made against his earnest wishes, and, although, another would have been nominated if he had refused, yet no other nomination could have given such emphasis to the character of the Convention and done as much harm."—Benton's Thirty Years in the United States Senate, Vol. II. p. 723.

NOTE 4, p. 43. In his Kent letter of October 26th, 1860, Mr. Tilden said: "I never adopted the doctrine of absolute and universal exclusion. by Federal legislation, of slavery from all Territories, and still less that of the exclusion of new Slave States." But he was a delegate to the Buffalo Convention, and

approved its platform and resolutions, and stumped New York for its candidates. Here is the eighth resolution of that Convention :

[EIGHTH RESOLUTION.]

"*Resolved*, That we accept the issue which the Slave power has forced upon us, and to their demand for more Slave States and more Slave Territories, our calm and final answer is: No more Slave States and no more Slave Territories. Let the soil of our extensive domains be ever kept free."

Is the language I use in the text too strong to characterize such a misrepresentation as the Tilden-Kent letter?

NOTE 5, p. 45. Extracts from the Official Report of the proceedings of the Fremont Black Republican Convention, held at Syracuse, July 24, 1856 :

"A resolution for the appointment of a committee of two from each Judicial District, to prepare resolutions and an address, was offered. Carried. The committee was appointed as follows: Messrs. Lucius Robinson, Noah Davis, etc.

[FROM THE ADDRESS.]

"The time has come for Democrats to declare their independence of those packed conventions which have lately assumed to dictate the measures and the candidates of the Democracy. That party of glorious memory, which once spoke and acted for freedom, has fallen into the hands of officeholders and political adventurers. * * *

"Mr. Buchanan, the candidate of the Cincinnati Convention, stands pledged to make the resolutions of that convention his rule of faith and practice. Such a candidate, under such circumstances, we cannot support. Shall we, then, throw away our votes? That we cannot do, for two reasons: One, that we shall thus indirectly contribute to Mr. Buchanan's election; the other, that there is a choice. Mr. Fremont, who has been nominated by the Republicans, is an acceptable choice. In his hands the Presidential office will be vigorously and justly administered. We have, therefore, nominated him for the Presidency, and his associate, Mr. Dayton, for the Vice-Presidency, and we ask you, Democrats of the State of New York, to ratify this nomination.

[Signed] "LUCIUS ROBINSON,
NOAH DAVIS," &c.,
"Committee on Address."

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